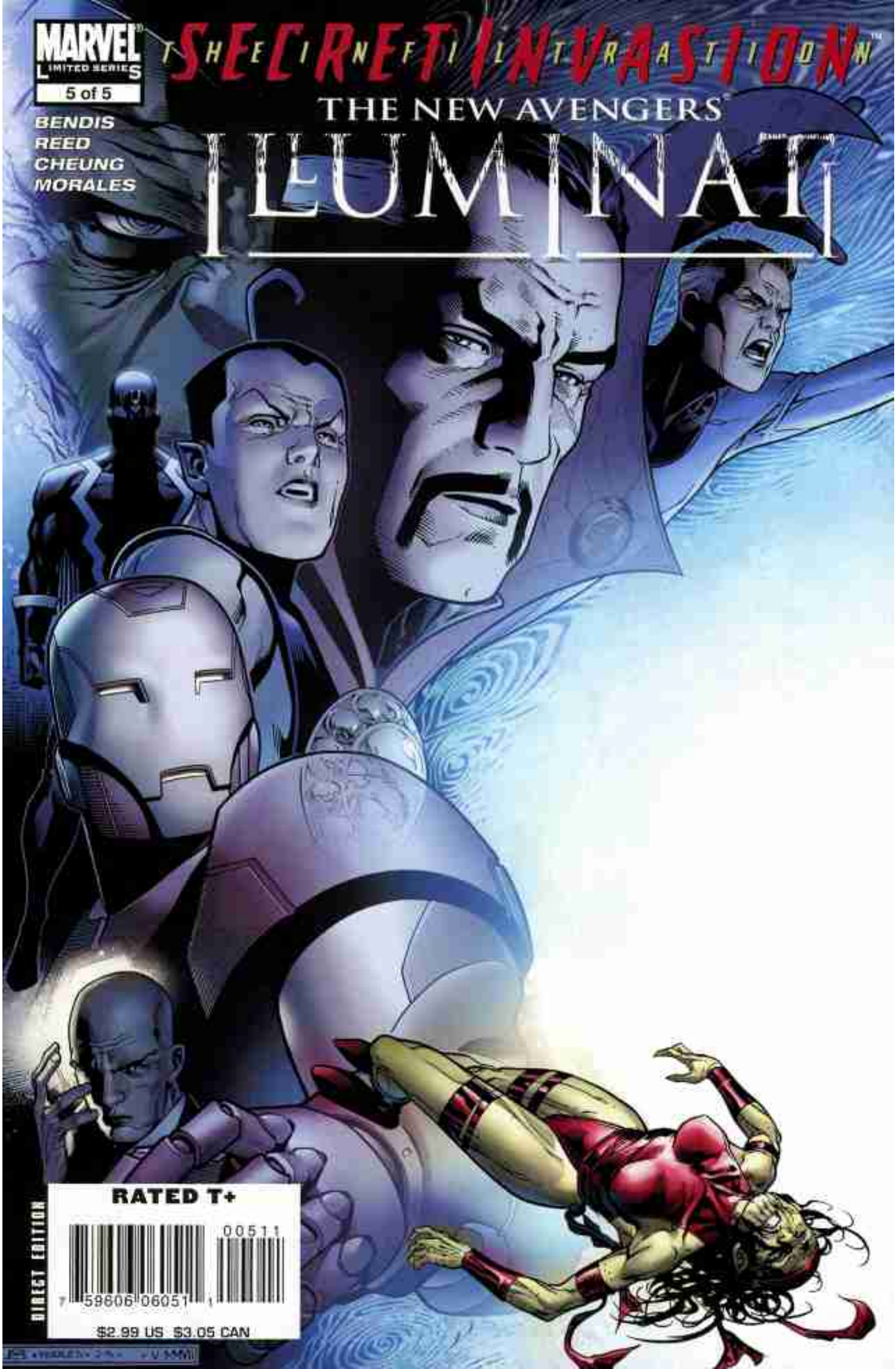
MARVEL
LIMITED SERIES
5 of 5
SECRET INVASION
THE NEW AVENGERS
ILLUMINATI
BENDIS
REED
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RATED T+
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$2.99 US $3.05 CAN
DIRECT EDITION

THE NEW AVENGERS
ILLUMINATI

The Illuminati is a secret organization comprised of several of the world's most powerful heroes: Sorcerer Supreme Doctor Strange; Black Bolt, King of the Inhumans; Charles Xavier, founder of the X-Men and mutant rights activist; Reed Richards, founding member of the Fantastic Four; Namor, the Sub-Mariner, Ruler of Atlantis; and Iron Man, founding member of the Avengers.

These six men have worked together to shape the superhuman world. To keep the trust between the group members, the Illuminati's existence has been kept secret from everyone, including the members' teammates and families.

What they've done together has remained a mystery...until now...

Years ago, after the legendary Kree/Skrull War, the Illuminati traveled to the Skrull world to tell the shape-shifting alien race that they would not tolerate any more attempts at an Earth invasion. That did not go well.

Since then, evidence of a Skrull infestation among the superhuman community has made itself known.

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Penciler
Jim Cheung

Inker
Mark Morales

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FUNTIME INC.
ENERGY FLUCTUATION DETECTED.
ENERGY FLUCTUATION MATCHES DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE'S PROJECTION FROM THE ASTRAL PLANE.
IDENTITY CONFIRMED. DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE
OCCUPATION: SORCERER SUPREME
WHOSE BODY IS THAT?
DOCTOR...

I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D SHOW UP.
AFTER THE HULK AND THE CIVIL WAR--
--I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D TRY TO CALL US BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.
AND YET HERE YOU ARE.
CURIOSITY... GOT THE BETTER OF ME.
WELL, SOME OF YOU.
I'M ON THE ASTRAL PLANE.
I THOUGHT IT BEST IF THERE WAS A BARRIER BETWEEN US.
ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.
WHO IS THAT?

WE SHOULD WAIT FOR THE OTHERS.
READING: FOUR HUMANOID LIFE FORMS WITHIN A RADIUS OF 100 FEET.
SCANNING...
HOW IS EVERYONE?
EVERYONE WHO?
YOUR AVENGERS.
AS TO BE EXPECTED.
BUT PLEASE DO NOT START YOUR "WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?" THING WITH ME. I JUST CAN'T HAVE THAT CONVERSATION—
I WASN'T GOING TO.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT ANY OF THAT ANYMORE.
BLACKAGAR BOLTAGON
ALIAS: BLACK BOLT
OCCUPATION: MONARCH OF THE INHUMANS
IDENTITY CONFIRMED
WE'RE WAITING FOR THE OTHERS.
WE'RE WAITING.
REED RICHARDS
ALIAS: MISTER FANTASTIC
GENTLEMEN...
GROUP AFFILIATION: FANTASTIC FOUR
OCCUPATION: SCIENTIST, ADVENTURER
IDENTITY CONFIRMED
PRINCE NAMOR
IS-IS THAT CAPTAIN AMERICA?
ALIAS: SUB-MARINER
OCCUPATION: MONARCH
IDENTITY: CONFIRMED
NO.
WHAT'S GOING ON?
ALL OF US HAVE TO BE HERE.
WELL, I WISH I KNEW WE WERE ALLOWED TO CALL EACH OTHER TOGETHER BEFORE MY EMPIRE CRUMBLED ALL AROUND ME.
OH, REALLY?
YOU COULD HAVE CALLED US.
THE REAL QUESTION IS: WHY DIDN'T YOU?
I DIDN'T KNOW I COULD TRUST YOU.
CHARLES FRANCIS XAVIER
IDENTITY: CONFIRMED
OCCUPATION: MUTANT LEADER
GROUP AFFILIATION: X-MEN
CHARLES, YOUR LEGS!
CONGRATULATIONS.
YES. IT'S...A LONG STORY.
OKAY! OKAY!
THAT'S EVERYONE! NOW WHO IS THIS?
THIS WAS BROUGHT TO ME...
I THOUGHT, EVEN WITH ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, IT WAS WORTH GETTING US TOGETHER AGAIN...
...ONE MORE TIME...

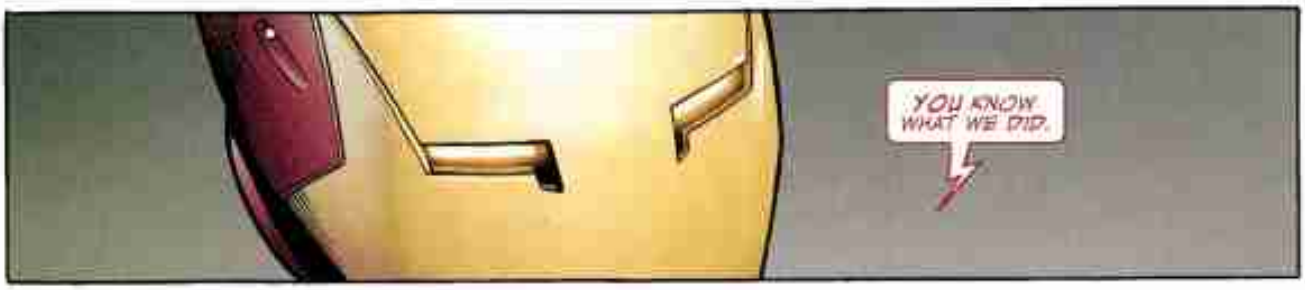
JESSICA DREW BROUGHT THIS SKRULL TO ME. THE NEW AVENGERS FOUND IT IN JAPAN.
THAT'S TRUE. I WAS THERE.
AND YOU WEREN'T GOING TO BRING IT TO ME?
NO ONE IN MY GROUP TRUSTS YOU. THEY ALL THINK YOU MIGHT BE A SKRULL, GIVEN YOUR RECENT BEHAVIOR.
WHAT IS IT WEARING?

IT WAS POSING AS ELEKTRA.
NATCHIOS. DAREDEVIL'S EX-GIRLFRIEND, KINGPIN'S EX-RIGHT HAND.
ELEKTRA?

SHE--IT WAS RUNNING THE HAND AND QUIETLY WRESTING CONTROL OF THE JAPANESE UNDERWORLD.
ELEKTRA WAS A SKRULL FOR HOW LONG?
I DON'T KNOW.
WHERE'S THE REAL ELEKTRA?

DEAD, GONE. I DON'T KNOW.
BELIEVE ME, I HAVE LOOKED. I PUT THE ENTIRETY OF S.H.I.E.L.D. BEHIND IT. SHE IS NOT TO BE FOUND.
I BROUGHT THIS TO YOU BECAUSE I THINK WE'RE AT WAR--
WAR?

AND I THINK IT'S OUR FAULT.
AND THIS IS OUR FAULT HOW?

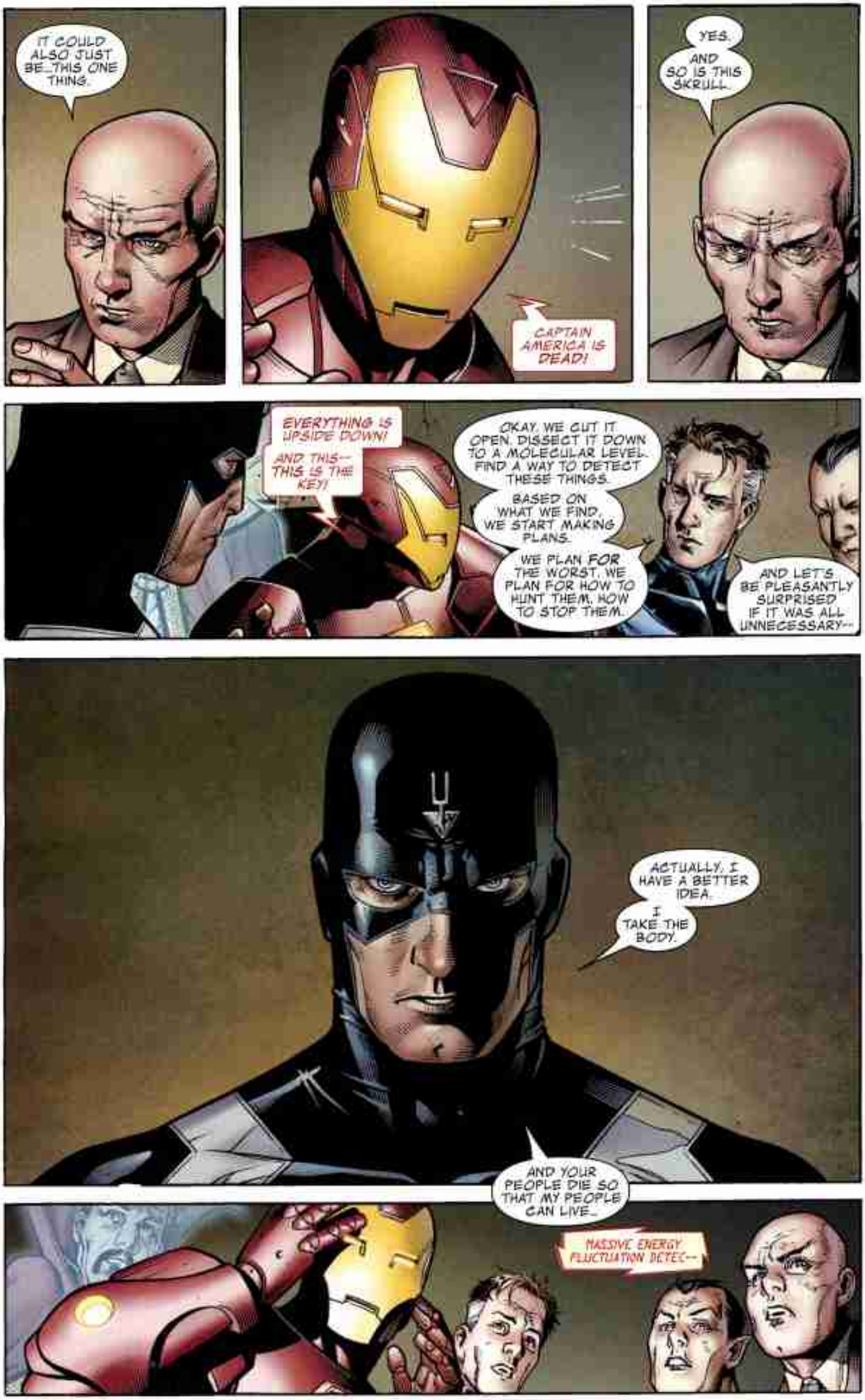

YOU KNOW WHAT WE DID.

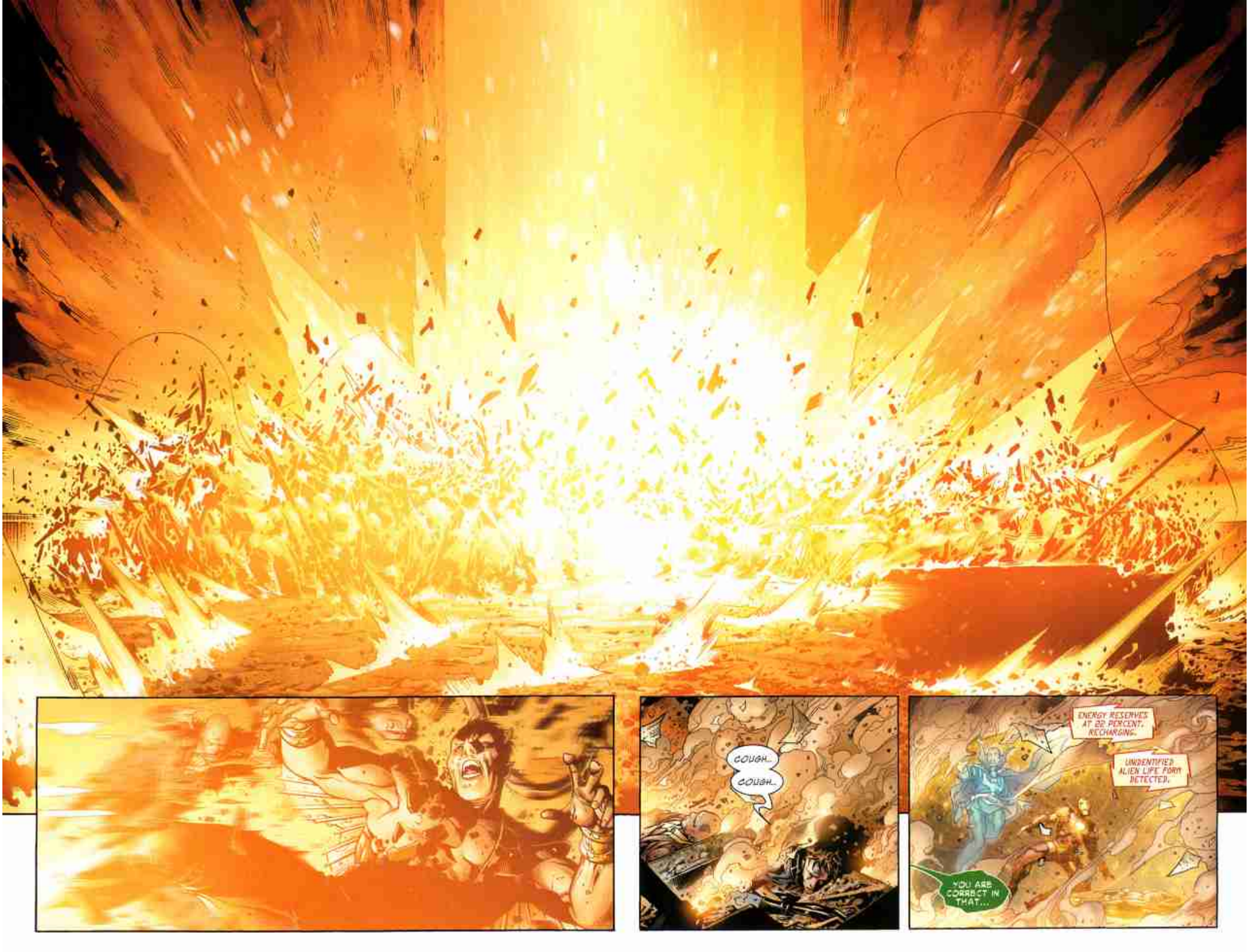
NO.
WE ENTERED THEIR HOMEWORLD.
NO.
WE DESTROYED THEIR--
NO, THEY STARTED IT.
OH. WELL, THEN...
THEY DID.

WHAT IRON MAN WANTS TO SAY--WHAT I AM SURE JESSICA DREW TOLD YOU--IS THAT THIS ELEKTRA SKRULL WAS UNDETECTABLE BY WOLVERINE'S MUTANT POWER, MY MAGIC, OR SPIDER-MAN'S SENSES.

WELL, THAT'S FASCINATING.
WE'LL HAVE TO CUT IT OPEN AND START AN AUTOPSY.
YES, YES.
WE HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO DETECT THEM.
SO ONE SKRULL IN ALL THE WORLD DRESSES UP LIKE A WOMAN AND WE'RE AT WAR?
YES.
THAT'S QUITE A LEAP.
ONE SKRULL THAT WE'VE FOUND.
THAT WE'VE FOUND.
ONE SKRULL AND YOU ASSUME--
AFTER WHAT WE DID? I AM GOING TO ASSUME THE VERY WORST. YES.

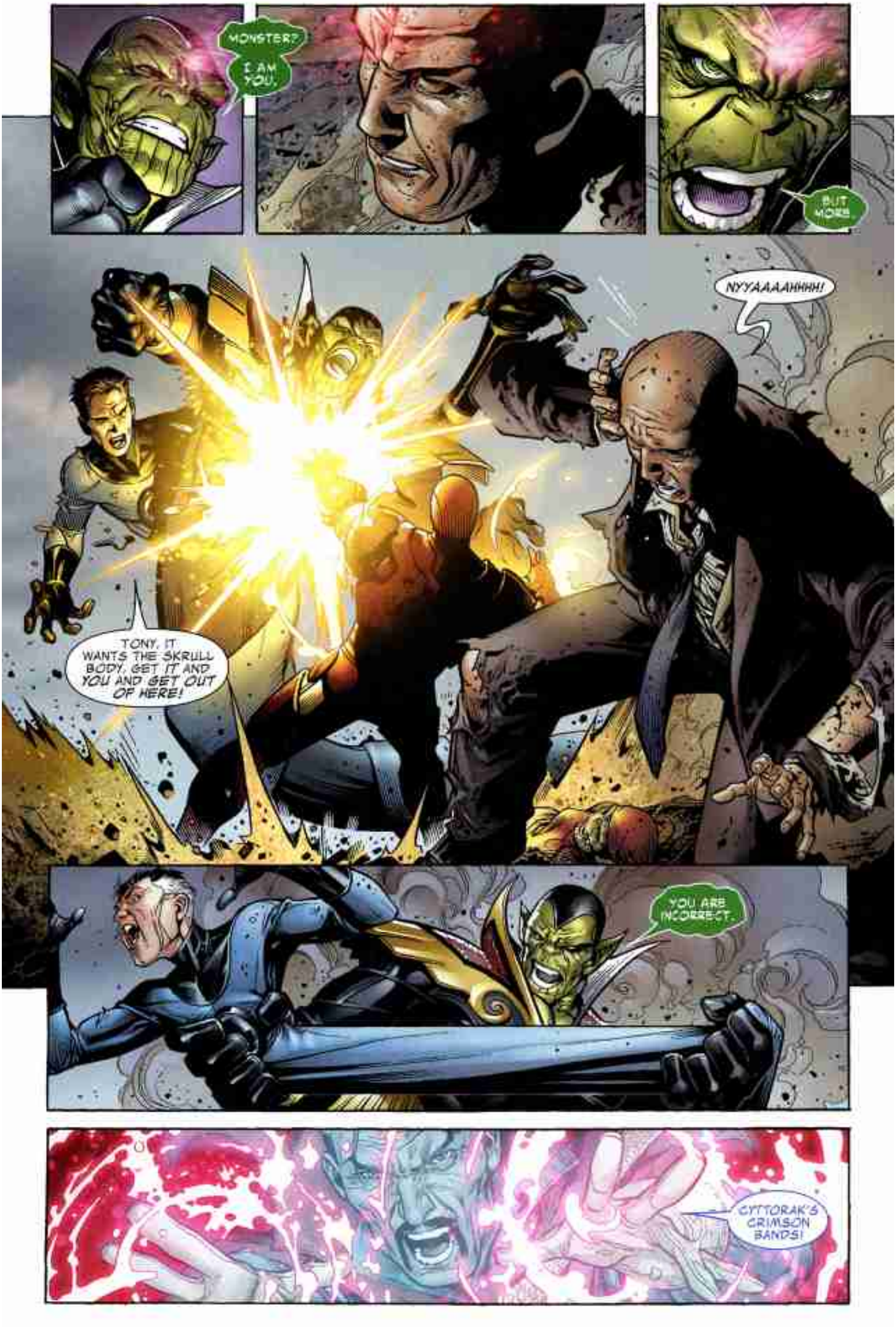
UNLESS IT'S JUST ONE WORKING ON ITS OWN, STRANDED HERE, TRYING TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT.
THINK ABOUT-- THINK ABOUT THE YEAR WE'VE HAD.
THE AVENGERS DESTROYED, WE'RE FIGHTING EACH OTHER. THE MUTANTS ARE ALL BUT GONE. ATLANTIS--
NICK FURY IS OUT.
AND CAPTAIN AMERICA IS DEAD.
THINK OF ALL THAT...
--AND YOU TELL ME IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE WE'RE BEING WORKED OVER? MANIPULATED FROM WITHIN?

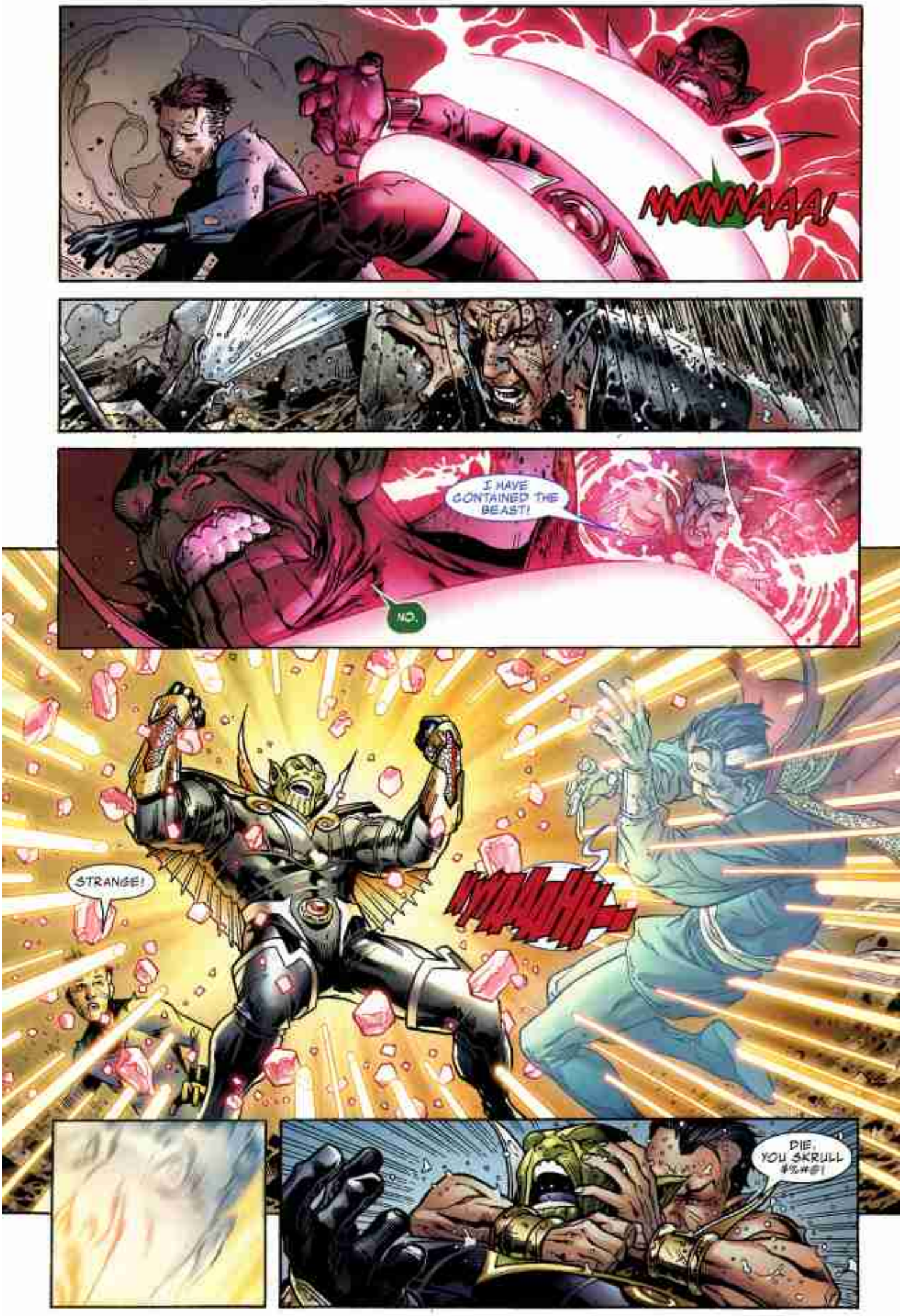

IT COULD ALSO JUST BE_THIS ONE THING.
CAPTAIN AMERICA IS DEAD!
YES. AND SO IS THIS SKRULL.
EVERYTHING IS UPSIDE DOWN!
AND THIS-- THIS IS THE KEY!
OKAY. WE CUT IT OPEN. DISSECT IT DOWN TO A MOLECULAR LEVEL. FIND A WAY TO DETECT THESE THINGS.
BASED ON WHAT WE FIND, WE START MAKING PLANS.
WE PLAN FOR THE WORST. WE PLAN FOR HOW TO HUNT THEM. HOW TO STOP THEM.
AND LET'S BE PLEASANTLY SURPRISED IF IT WAS ALL UNNECESSARY--
ACTUALLY. I HAVE A BETTER IDEA.
I TAKE THE BODY.
AND YOUR PEOPLE DIE SO THAT MY PEOPLE CAN LIVE.
MASSIVE ENERGY FLUCTUATION DETEC--

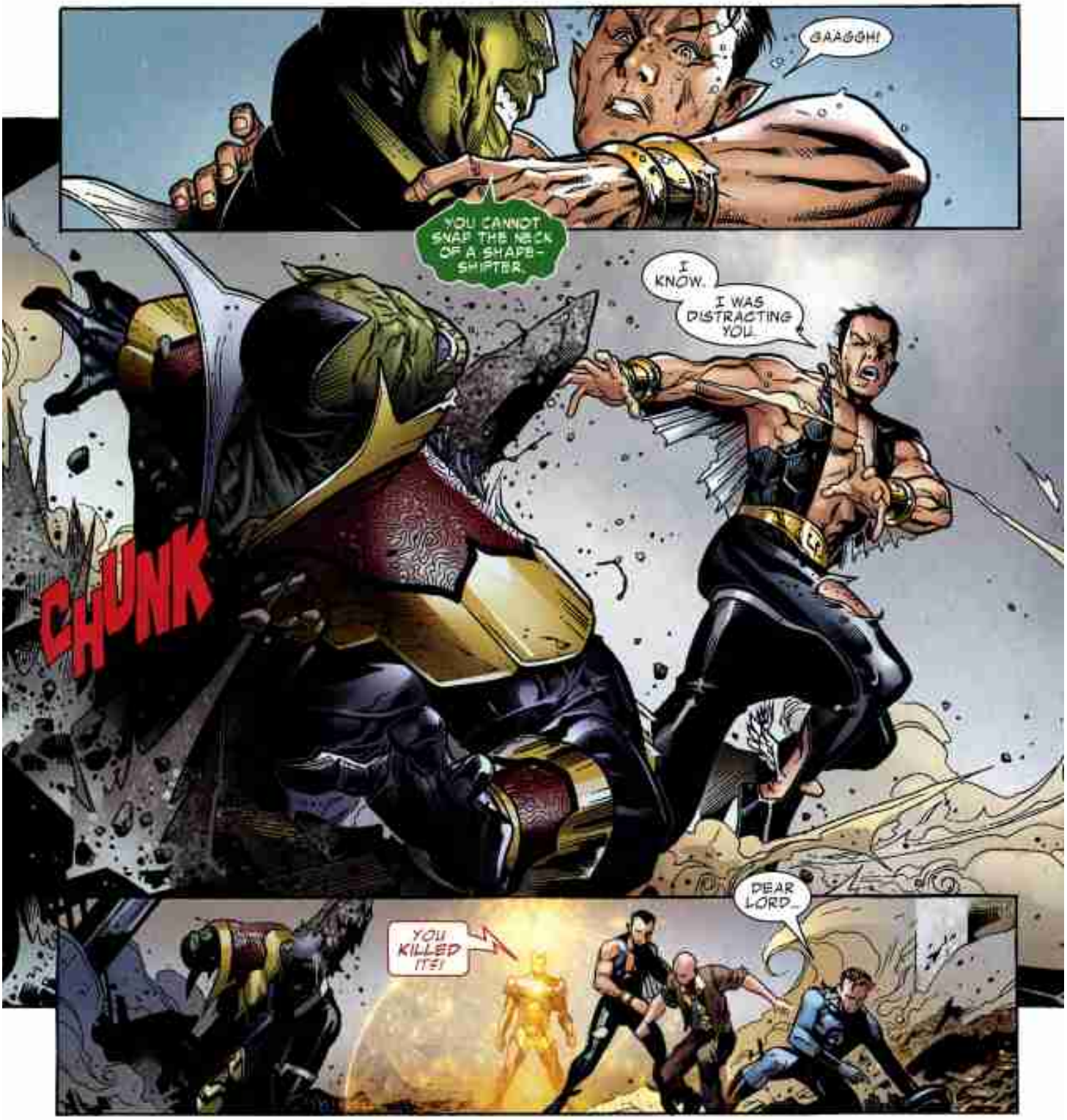

COUGH...
COUGH...
ENERGY RESERVES AT 22 PERCENT. RECHARGING.
UNIDENTIFIED ALIEN LIFE FORM DETECTED.
YOU ARE CORRECT IN THAT...

THIS WORLD HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM YOU.
AS IT WAS WRITTEN, IT IS NOW DONE.

IMPERIUS REX!
GRRAGH!
WHAROOM
WHAROOM
ENERGY RESERVES AT 23 PERCENT.
HE'S MOVING FASTER THAN MY TARGETING SOFTWARE CAN READ, DOCTOR!
I'M CONJURING A CONTAINMENT SPELL
FWOOM
DOCTOR...
HOLD ON..
ENERGY YIELD AT 11 PERCENT.
YOU MONSTER--


MONSTER?
I AM YOU.
BUT MORE.
NYYAAAAHHHH!
TONY, IT WANTS THE SKRULL BODY, GET IT AND YOU AND GET OUT OF HERE!
YOU ARE INCORRE-CT.
CYTTORAK'S CRIMSON BANDS!


NNNNAAA!
I HAVE CONTAINED THE BEAST!
NO.
STRANGE!
DIE, YOU SKRULL %*#@!


GAAGGH!
YOU CANNOT SNAP THE NECK OF A SHAPE-SHIFTER.
I KNOW. I WAS DISTRACTING YOU.
CHUNK
YOU KILLED IT!
DEAR LORD...

IT WAS TRYING TO KILL US.
IT HAD INFORMATION--
YOU SAID YOURSELF THAT WE ARE AT WAR!
AND THAT WAS A POTENTIAL PRISONER OF WAR!

SORRY!
ENERGY FLUCTUATION DETECTED.
IDENTITY: CONFIRMED. DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE
OCCUPATION: SORCERER SUPREME
I GOT BACK AS SOON AS I COULD.
I-I WASN'T PREPARED FOR ANYTHING LIKE THAT. MY POWERS AREN'T WHAT THEY--

NAMOR'S RIGHT. THERE WAS NO WAY WE WERE GOING TO CONTAIN THAT THING.
WHAT IS OUR NEXT STEP?
ALIEN LIFE FORMS DETECTED.
OH NO.
GENETIC TYPE UNIDENTIFIED.
GUYS!

HE WASN'T ALONE.
SHIELDS UP!
SHIELD ENERGY AT 64 PERCENT.
C-STAT NUCLEAR UPLINK ACTIVATED.
CHARLES, LISTEN TO MY THOUGHTS.
CONNECTED: SALEM NUCLEAR POWER PLANT.
HAVE STRANGE READY. WHEN I GIVE THE WORD, HAVE HIM TELEPORT THE FOUR OF YOU OUT OF HERE.
ENERGY FIELDS AT 33 PERCENT.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
CONNECTED: OYSTER CREEK NUCLEAR POWER STATION.
JUST TELL HIM.
ENERGY FIELDS AT 7 PERCENT.
TARGETING?
HOLD PLEASE.
ENERGY FIELDS AT 2 PERCENT.
CONNECTED: HOPE CREEK NUCLEAR.
READY.
POWER CORE AT MAXIMUM CAPACITY.
NOW!!
TONY, I--
DO IT! NOW!

TONY?

THEY DIDN'T KNOW I COULD DO THAT.
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD DO THAT.
NOW THEY KNOW. IT WON'T WORK TWICE.
ARE THERE MORE COMING?
AREA SECURE.
NOT YET.
HOW DID YOU DO THAT?
I-I COULDN'T READ ITS THOUGHTS.
ITS THOUGHTS WERE THAT OF "BLACK BOLT" OR...OR THEY WERE ABLE TO MAKE ME THINK THEY WERE.
WHERE IS THE REAL BLACK BOLT?
THE PLAN TODAY WAS TO ASSASSINATE US SO WE HAVE TO ASSUME THE WORST.
BUT HOW LONG WAS THAT ONE POSING AS BLACK BOLT?
MAYBE FROM THE DAY WE WENT TO THEM...
NO. THE PLAN WASN'T TO ASSASSINATE US. THEY COULD HAVE SENT AN ARMY OF SOUPED-UP SUPER-SKRULLS HERE AND DONE THAT.
THE PLAN WAS TO TURN US AGAINST EACH OTHER.
AND IF THEY PICKED A COUPLE OF US OFF IN THE MEANTIME, HEY, WHAT THE HELL...
MAYBE.
BUT WHAT ARE THEY DOING DIFFERENT? WHY CAN'T WE TELL THEM APART FROM US--?
WHY US?
WHY ARE THEY SINGLING US OUT?

BECAUSE, LIKE I TOLD YOU THE DAY WE FIRST GATHERED...
...TO THEM, WE ARE THE PROTECTORS OF THE WORLD.
AREA SECURE. NO ALIEN LIFE FORMS IDENTIFIED.
WE ARE THE KINGS. WE ARE THE LEADERS.
WHEN THEY CAPTURED US YEARS AGO...IT SEEMS THAT THEY TOOK FROM US WHAT THEY NEEDED TO STRIKE AT US AGAIN.
WELL, WE BETTER START GATHERING WHAT WE NEED.
WE HAVE A DAY AT BEST.
WE ARE AT WAR AND WE HAVE MAYBE ALREADY LOST THAT WAR.
I DON'T TRUST ANY OF YOU!
HE'S RIGHT.
WE'D BE KIDDING EACH OTHER TO EVEN CONTINUE THIS CONVERSATION.
WHO CAN WE TRUST?

THE END
THE SKRULL THREAT CONTINUES IN SECRET INVASION

FURY'S FILES

Discovered in a decommissioned S.H.I.E.L.D. safehouse, below is a list of little known facts about the X-Men that Nick Fury had personally collected to be used or leveraged when necessary.

After being shot by a mutant power neutralizing gun designed by Forge and therefore losing her powers, Storm was granted the power of Thor, given an Uru Hammer and new weather powers by Loki.

Wolverine's claws actually burst out right through his skin, not through any kind of permanent holes. His mutant healing factor heals the wounds instantly.

Psylocke is a natural blonde.

X-23 is named due to her being the 23rd attempt to clone Wolverine and the intact X chromosome that was duplicated to replace the damaged Y one, which resulted in her being female. She is the only successful cloning attempt of Wolverine.

The image inducer Nightcrawler uses to appear human was invented by Tony Stark.

Dazzler temporarily acted as a herald of Galactus, when the world-devourer granted her powers on a cosmic scale so that she could hunt down Terrax, a former herald who had abused his powers.

Scarlet Witch and Angel briefly dated.

In Weird Al's song "White & Nerdy" one of the lines is "I've been browsin' and inspectin', X-Men comics you know I collect 'em." In the music video Al is holding up four X-Men comics: Uncanny X-Men #201, 210, 221 & 268.

Storm's real name, Ororo, means "Beauty."

Over the years, the minds of three different X-Men found themselves trapped in the body of the White Queen – Jean Grey, Storm and Iceman.

Xavier once had a shapeshifter named Changeling assume his identity while he secretly prepared for an alien invasion. When the Changeling died in battle, the X-Men held a funeral for their mentor having no idea that he was actually alive.

Jubilee suffers from dyscalculia: an inability to complete mathematical problems.

Beast and Nightcrawler don't have blue skin, only a fine coat of blue fur.

Deadpool was once a bodyguard for Dazzler.

While working as an agent for the C.I.A., Wolverine once saved Spider-Man's parents from Hydra.

Professor X has been crippled (and healed) 4 times:
1st – In a fight with Lucifer
2nd – Crushed in a fight with the Shadow King
3rd – After he got the Techno-Organic Virus
4th – Magneto stopped the nanites in his spine from working
(After House of M, the Scarlet Witch had cured his spine, and he is now walking)

Storm was originally conceived by Dave Cockrum as "the Black Cat", a character who could transform into a feline creature or a house cat.

PORTFOLIO REVIEW

From the mind of the legendary X-MEN writer, Chris Claremont, comes a book unlike any other. They are a team from every timeline, safeguarding our future. But things have changed. A new leader, new members, new worlds, new adversaries. These are the *NEW EXILES*. Presented here for the first time is a behind-the-scenes look at what went into creating this team from series artist Tom Grummett, as well as hints of what's to come...

"ROGUE has come from a very different experience from the Rogue we all know and love. Her background is one of wealth, privilege and sophistication, but her powers set her apart... my approach to Rogue is "you can look, but don't touch - or else."

"MISTIQ is an alternate-earth version of Mystique: very cultured and Old World charming... Basil Rathbone with superpowers."

EXILES COMMENTS BY TOM GRUMMETT

"SABRETOOTH really came into focus for me when Chris described him as 'the sexy beast'. I just had to run with that."

"CAT PRYDE is sixteen, smart and spunky... I think of her as the classic version of Kitty."

"MORPH is Morph. You can dress him up any way you like, but he's going to turn into a fire hydrant or something, and boom!...he's back in his cape."

NEW EXILES #1

JANUARY 2008

LOOK WHO'S TALKING!

WRITER MATT FRACTION

MARVEL: *Reading Immortal* ***Iron Fist****, it's clear you and Ed Brubaker are having a blast. What makes this such a fun book for you as a creator?*

MATT FRACTION: I think the character, honestly. I hope character is at the root of everything I do, and Danny's is remarkable to say the least. I always sort of felt our first arc was about Danny and the reader, discovering at the same time how exciting and thrilling the Iron Fist actually is – that our first storyline was a chance to celebrate everything that makes him great and hopefully convince other people to fall in love with him at the same time. So really, the answer is the character himself. It's all there, we're just polishing it up and showing it off.

The collaboration is great fun, too. Ed and I constantly trying to out-awesome one another makes it fun, too.

M: *Iron Fist is one of those characters no one would've expected to be such a mainstream critical darling. Why do you think he's so irresistible to such a diverse group of people?*

MF: Three words, baby: KUNG FU BILLIONAIRE. It shouldn't be rocket science, you know? Reduce Danny Rand down to his three most essential words and you find a great comic book waiting to happen.

M: *We've recently learned that Danny Rand can do some pretty cool new things with his power. What's the oddest/funniest new thing Danny can do with the power of the Iron Fist?*

MF: He can keep artist David Aja hypnotized into staying on THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST for a good long while, when surely he could be drawing almost any book on the market.

M: *Why the aversion to shirts from Danny's opponents such as Davos? Do they just realize their costumes could never be as cool?*

MF: Super-villains in Danny's world are sick and tired of your uptight nipple oppression, pal. Maybe if button-down squares like you weren't such shirt-fascists, these guys wouldn't have to BE evil? Why are you so afraid of male nipples, huh? You ever bother to ask yourself that? *OUT OF THE SHIRTS, AND INTO THE STREETS! OUT OF THE SHIRTS, AND INTO THE STREETS! OUT OF THE SHIRTS, AND INTO THE STREETS!*

M: *Over in* ***The Order*** *we've got quite a damaged group of heroes. This can't end well for all parties involved, can it? I foresee a lot of headaches for Stark...*

MF: As time goes on, the grand secret of the Order will be revealed– it's a social experiment, first and foremost. Here's the thing: we're ALL damaged. All of us– real and fictional alike. Stark is just as damaged as Henry Hellrung or Dr. Doom or whomever.

So the question isn't how damaged are the people in the Order and what's gonna happen when they screw up, but rather, we're ALL human, we ALL screw up, and so, for these damaged people, what do they do when given the opportunity to heal themselves by helping others? When given the opportunity to rise, do they take it?

Also, how many billions of things can I get Barry Kitson to draw in a single panel?

M: *One of the most fascinating aspects of this book is that our leads are clearly heroes while fighting evil...but outside of their super-heroic identities, there are certainly some concerns about their decisions. Just how far will some of these characters go to right what they perceive as wrongs?*

MF: You know, I just wrote a scene between Kate (the PR person) and Pepper Potts, arguing over that same point. I think that's really the very definition of "hero"– when you're willing to walk alone and take grave risks to do the right thing. "Speak your mind, even if your voice trembles," right? In a nutshell, that's what the Order is all about. Rising up and doing right, in the face of near-insurmountable difficulty.

M: *You've created most of these characters from scratch (though some like Pepper have been around awhile), meaning they're a blank canvas for you to paint. Is that freedom ever intimidating or just a writer's dream come true?*

MF: Boy, a little bit of both, really. It's great to be given the chance to create a brand new super-hero team for the Marvel Universe, and the pride of creation I know Barry and I both feel is incredible beyond belief. To be allowed to sew our little square onto the, uh, Marvel quilt, is just incredible.

M: *These guys can only be heroes for one year. What happens if someone doesn't want to stop helping the helpless after one year?*

MF: Let me answer your question with a question: do you need a cape and superpowers to help the helpless?

'Nuff Said!

QUESTIONS THAT NEED ANSWERS!

IF YOU COULD DATE A MARVEL CHARACTER, WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

The Wasp. At least that way, the stingers would be out where you could see them and could duck.
- J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI – Writer
(Thor, The Twelve, Amazing Spider-Man)

Wow... talk about a creepy question! I mean, you do realize that these are just fictional characters and -- Oh, heck, who am I kidding? Kitty Pryde. Definitely Kitty Pryde!
- MARC SUMERAK – Writer
(Franklin Richards)

I don't really have an answer for this (maybe Jessica Drew-- she's freaky), but I'm dying to know if Bendis said "Luke Cage" or not. Because if he didn't, he's LYING.
- BRIAN REED – Writer
(Captain Marvel, Ms. Marvel, New Avengers: Illuminati)

Luke Cage! Wait, is this for publication?? I mean Kitty Pryde!! Because I like me a nice Jewish girl!
- BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS – (Jewish) Writer
(New & Mighty Avengers, Ultimate Spider-Man)

Anyone BUT Psylocke. A mind reader who can go all ninja on you? That's just asking for trouble...
- DAN SLOTT – Writer
(Avengers: The Initiative, Amazing Spider-Man)

Everyone who knows me would assume Psylocke, but I'd prefer to date Mary Jane. Sorry, Spidey.
- C.B. CEBULSKI – Writer
(Loners, Marvel Fairy Tales)

Squirrel Girl. 'Nuff Said!
JOE QUESADA – Marvel Editor-in-Chief, Artist
(Amazing Spider-Man)

Wasp, because she's rich and emotionally damaged.
- FRANK CHO – Artist, Writer
(Mighty Avengers)

Any one that's been drawn by Frank Cho!
- CHRIS YOST – Writer
(New X-Men, X-Force)

Dead Girl. That way, the date could continue if we got hit by a truck on the way to the restaurant.
- FRED VAN LENTE – Writer
(Super-Villain Team-Up, Incredible Hulk)

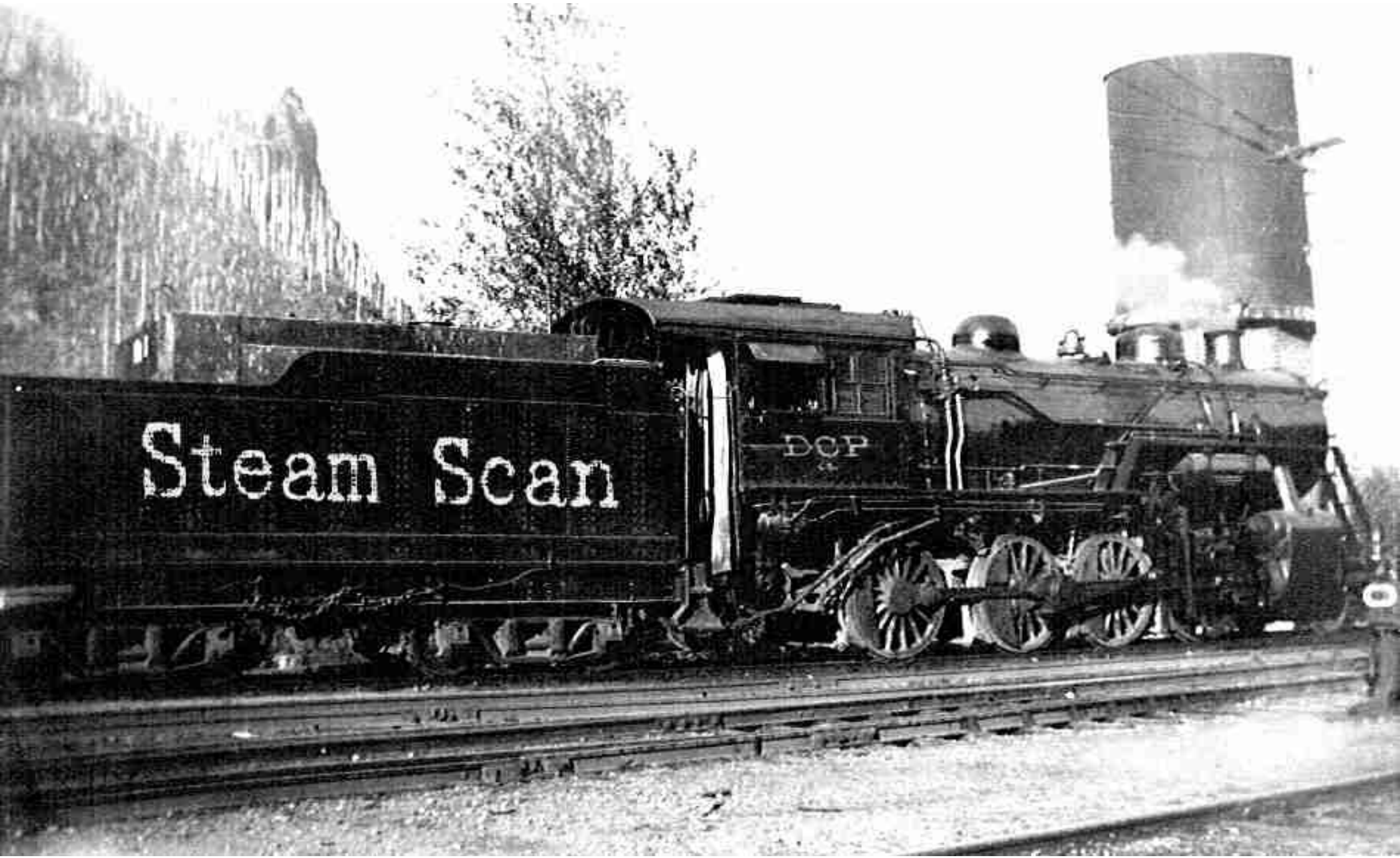
Galactus. I bet he has funny stories.
- MATT FRACTION – Writer
(The Order, Punisher War Journal, The Immortal Iron Fist)

Clea -- sorry, Dr. Strange! We'd be going out on dates in wacky dimensions with floating fangs and eyes and clocks...
- JEFF PARKER – Writer
(X-Men: First Class)

Mystique... Because then I could "date" anyone I wanted. :)
CRAIG KYLE – Writer
(New X-Men)

Gambit. I know he's dirty hot, which is usually not what I go for (my boyfriend looks JUST like Peter Parker from Spider-Man Loves Mary Jane), but I've loved him since I was teeny-tiny and watching the old X-Men cartoons. And the best part would be that he could actually touch ME! >:)
CHRISTINA STRAIN – Colorist
(World War Hulk, Runaways)

NOW YOU KNOW!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